

Steal This Hook! The Tyrannical Eye

By Doug Beyer



Hey, you there, DM! Got your eye on the beholder page of the [Monster Manual](#)? Found yourself chuckling maniacally at an eye tyrant mini you found in a [Deathknell](#) booster? Picked up a copy of [Lords of Madness](#) and can't wait to inflict -- er, incorporate it into your campaign? Then today's Steal This Hook! is for you. Today's theme is *the tyrannical eye*: all beholder hooks, all the time. Enjoy. (Note: This article relies heavily on material found in *Lords of Madness: The Book of Aberrations*.)

Kragxulashtut's Greedy Gaze

The floating towers of Arcanix support a connoisseur's array of mystical literature. Somewhere between a wizard's library and a magic history museum, the Wadrugan Display is proctored by a stern gnome by the name of Milia Wadrugan. Together with her assistant, a human lad named Draph, Milia works hard to encourage wealthy and influential clients to lend their rare magic relics to the display so that she can provide those relics the public attention they deserve. That's why the young assistant Draph is worried, now that Milia has, without explanation, packed up several of the most ancient and rare exhibits and taken them down into the storage cellar. Draph wonders whether he should contact someone to investigate Milia's cellar, but at first he decides against it.



Then the half-eaten and bloody remains of the mage MacNagus, the Wadrugan Display's top arcane scholar, are found near the back of the cellar. Draph contacts the PCs to investigate.

Milia Wadrugan has been *charmed* by a resident beholder named Kragxulashtut. Kragxulashtut has fed its magical energy needs by gazing upon the delicious variety of magic items that come through the Wadrugan Display. Recently, though, it has decided it dislikes hiding in the lair under the cellar and has begun venturing out to explore. MacNagus met his fate by running into the beholder on one of its recent topside jaunts. Will the PCs fare better?

A Twisted Tyrant Tale

A cult of beholder-worshippers, led by a corrupt council of humans and dwarves, takes over a small, rural Karnathi town and begins making converts. A local magistrate hires adventurers to bring him the leaders of this cult, dead or alive, and offers them an extra reward if they can slay the beholder behind it all as well. But there are many layers to this onion. First of all, the PCs find evidence that there may *be* no beholder behind the cult at all -- it could be only a system of influence to control the lesser cultists and a few showy illusion spells to fake the beholder's presence. But then the heroes discover a beholder's lair after all, which leads them to suspect that the

resident beholder may have spread rumors of its own nonexistence out of acute paranoia.

But then the "beholder lair" may in turn be window-dressing for an elaborate ruse that the heroes trace back to the magistrate who hired them: *He* may be the true leader of the beholder-cult after all, or an abolisher (aberration hunter) using the heroes to flush out the eye tyrant, or the devotee of an insanely jealous rival beholder. Will the PCs uncover the truth? Will there actually be a beholder somewhere in the story, or just regular people using the terror of the eye tyrant as a weapon against each other?

Passages Below Eldeen

Druids in the Eldeen Reaches have gone mad. Complaining of a dreadful "music" gnawing at their minds, one by one they have succumbed to drooling catatonia. When the heroes investigate, they find a growing hive city of a few beholders and beholderkin under the forest floor. The beholders carve round, twisting tunnels through the earth using their *disintegrate* eyebeams, bringing dark energies to the jungles above and ravaging the natural order. When a powerful Gatekeeper druid and a tribe of shifters agree to join the heroes in assaulting the hive city, the PCs know they'll be in for an epic battle.

Encounter at Dreadwaste

The ragged but resolute heroes claw their way through the clue trails and the plotted encounters until they reach, at last, the lair of the black dragon Dreadwail. They enter the wyrm's sleeping chamber, only to find, to their surprise, an immense elder orb (*Lords of Madness*, page 41) with knuckly eyestalks and putrid, moss-covered skinplates, feasting on the remains of the wyrm they hunted. Eleven pupils, ten of them round and curious, the central one thin and evil, swivel around to regard them, and the needle-rimmed mouth emits a hissing, shrieking roar of rage.

But let's back up a bit -- what got the PCs into this mess? Could they be chasing a reward for destroying a troublesome young dragon when they run into the elder orb? Could the beholder have had an ongoing territorial dispute with Dreadwail, or a taste for dragon meat? Could the PCs have already discovered evidence that a long-lived beholder had taken residence in this countryside, or even have tricked the orb into entering Dreadwail's lair first? Or could the beholder be a ranking member of a daelkyr army forming against Khorvaire's aloof dragonkind?



Mini-Hooks

Here are some *tyrannical eye* mini-hooks to get your DM creativity started.

- A sane beholder (*Lords of Madness*, page 48) proposes to reveal the location of a hoard of dragonshards in exchange for citizenship in Breland.
- An artificer thinks he has discovered the key to preserving the strength of dead beholder bone; he requires multiple specimens of beholderkin to test his theories.

- A changeling rogue uses trickery to lure youths to a gas spore lair where he can loot valuables from the spores' victims.
 - Two spectators (*Lords of Madness*, page 140) engage the party in a battle of philosophical riddles in exchange for the key to a necromancer's laboratory.
 - A young bodyguard of House Medani seeks aid in finding the blue-spotted beholder who *charmed* his mistress, a baroness.
 - A beholder mage uses its network of spies and assassins to gather artifacts related to the Draconic Prophecy.
 - An immense beholder raids a winery, consuming half of its season's vintage and contaminating the other half with some vile excretion.
 - An irate, pregnant beholder seeks a Sharn sewer to begin its horrific birthing process.
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About the Author

Doug Beyer spent a lot of time getting philosophy degrees until he figured out that he should just move to Seattle and become a web developer for Wizards of the Coast. Now he spends his days working on games and his evenings playing them. Doug uses the time normally allotted for sleeping to lurk on the Wizards.com message boards as his alter ego, WotC_Doog.

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